

STARS AND STRIPES

Saturday, February 8, 2003

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

Report: Turkey to OK 38,000 U.S. troops

The Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey's top civilian and military leaders agreed Saturday to let the United States send 38,000 troops to the country to open a northern front in any Iraq war, private television NTV reported.

Washington had asked to station 80,000 troops in Turkey, but in the face of strong public opposition to war, Turkish leaders asked that the United States reduce the figure.

The decision, if verified, would have to be approved by parliament, which is expected to meet Feb. 18 to vote on a bill allowing in U.S. combat troops for an Iraq operation.

Lawmakers on Thursday voted to allow the United States to renovate bases and ports in Turkey and some 3,500 U.S. troops are expected in Turkey for that purpose.

NTV said the leaders agreed to let the United States launch attacks from three

air bases: Diyarbakir and Batman in southeastern Turkey and Incirlik in southern Turkey. U.S. and British planes are already stationed at Incirlik Air Base, which they use to patrol a no-fly zone over northern Iraq.

The United States would also be allowed to use three other bases for logistical support, and at least one Mediterranean port, NTV, Turkey's largest all-news station, said.

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Rumsfeld reportedly signs order for Kitty Hawk

From staff and wire reports

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has signed deployment orders for the USS Kitty Hawk to head to the Persian Gulf region, defense officials said.

The Kitty Hawk, now in its homeport at Yokosuka, Japan, has not yet been given the orders, according to a defense official at the Pentagon.

The carrier USS Carl Vinson, based in California, is to head to the Pacific Ocean to take over for the Kitty Hawk and maintain a carrier presence there, the Pentagon official said.

Reports of the ship movements first appeared in the Washington Post on Friday.

The Vinson just completed training missions off the coast of Hawaii, "so she's halfway there," the official said.

That carrier would take the Kitty Hawk's place for immediate response to any needs that might arise involving North Korea, which recently expelled international nuclear inspectors and restarted a nuclear plant capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium, the Post reported.

Kathleen Scott, whose husband, Lt. Cmdr. David Scott, is assigned to the Kitty Hawk, was pleased that the wait had ended.



Stars and Stripes

The USS Kitty Hawk may be heading soon to the Persian Gulf, according to news reports.

"The Kitty Hawk has a purpose. They're going to get the job done and come home to their families."

Rumsfeld's order to the USS Kitty Hawk, now in Japan, will put five aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf region within weeks, defense officials said. The USS Lincoln is now in the Arabian Sea, the Constellation is in the Persian Gulf, the Truman is in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Roosevelt just left Puerto Rico en route to the Mediterranean.

"The Central Command has now determined they need

five carriers," a defense official told the Post. The carriers, with 50 strike aircraft each, will be accompanied by their full battle groups, which means there will be more than 30 surface ships and submarines in the Gulf region capable of firing a total of more than 1,000 Tomahawk cruise missiles at targets in Iraq.

The Air Force is still 120 to 150 planes short of its full force in the region and probably won't have them in place until the end of February, one defense official said.

But more than 130 strike aircraft have been in the region

patrolling no fly zones over Iraq. Those planes, coupled with carrier-based aircraft and dozens of F-16 and F-15 fighters recently deployed, give the Pentagon a potent air arsenal now, with every Air Force and Navy plane capable of dropping precision-guided bombs.

Scott said she's been on this end of a deployment many times, and she often has to help new spouses deal with their first time away from the sailors they love.

"I tell them my whole philosophy is if I miss him, then it's a reminder how much I love him," Scott said. "It's what I tell the kids. If we all miss daddy, then it's a reminder just how special he is to us."

"They're a good group of people, we have a great captain and they will do just fine. I'm not worried because I don't have any control over how they do their job, but I know they know what they're doing. I just trust and pray a lot. If you think about it too much, it will drive you crazy."

For her husband, Scott had a personal message:

"I love you, I miss you and I'm looking forward to seeing you when you come home safe and sound."

Stars and Stripes' Sandra Jontz contributed to this article from the Pentagon.

Turkey

Continued from Page 1

U.S. officials have said a northern front would lead to a quicker war and have been relentlessly pressing Turkish leaders to back the war plans.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Lou Fintor refused to discuss details of discussions between Turkish and U.S. officials.

"We look forward to the Turkish parliament's consideration of the remainder of our requests," Fintor said. A top official of the governing Justice and Development Party said he expected easy approval for the basing agreement on Feb. 18.

Turkish officials refused to comment on the NTV report.

Prime Minister Abdullah Gul, top government ministers and Turkey's military chief, Gen. Hilmi Ozkok, met Saturday to iron out the details of the U.S. military presence in Turkey. After the meeting, the prime ministry issued a written statement saying only that they had discussed the political, military, and economic dimensions of the Iraqi situation.

Most Turks oppose a war in Iraq. The government has said that Turkey will not fight Iraq, but cannot afford to remain neutral in the conflict and must stand by its strategic ally, the United States.

In a televised address to the nation, Gul said Saturday that "any war in Iraq will not be Turkey's war."

"But we will also not let Turkey be faced with a situation where our country's economy, our state's security and our people's welfare are harmed," Gul said.

Gul said Turkey would continue to work for a peaceful solution to the standoff and said he was in contact with U.N. and world leaders to discuss Iraq. Gul spoke on the phone to British Prime Minister Tony Blair and NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson late Friday.

Although Turkey is a member of NATO, several members of the alliance are hesitant to deploy NATO equipment in the country ahead of a possible war. NATO members have until Monday to oppose giving Ankara access to the equipment or keep their objection silent, thereby allowing military preparations to automatically proceed.

France on Friday strongly hinted that it may oppose any deployment, arguing that it would give the wrong signal while U.N. efforts to avert war against Iraq continued.

Corrections

■ Because of an editing error, a story Friday about Europe-based troops deploying for a possible war on Iraq had incorrect information. According to Army spokeswoman Maj. Judith Gardener, about 2,000 logistics troops are being sent to areas within the European Command area of responsibility in support of Central Command operations, and to the Central Command area of responsibility.

■ A story in Friday's paper about budget cuts in the Department of Defense Dependents Schools Europe contained incorrect information. In regard to extracurricular activities, DODDS does not pay registration fees, but does pay transportation fees.

News tracker: What's new with old news

World

Arrests in Serbia: Police raided two ethnic Albanian strongholds in Serbia's volatile south bordering Kosovo early Saturday, seizing weapons and arresting 12 people, a top government official said.

In an early morning swoop, police burst into several houses in the hard-line villages of Veliki Trnovac and Konculj, about 120 miles southeast of Belgrade, said Nebojsa Covic, the Serbian deputy prime minister.

The police raid stirred tensions in the ethnically mixed south of Serbia bordering the U.N.-run province of Kosovo, which was the scene of an ethnic Albanian rebel insurgency more than two years ago.

Among those arrested early Saturday was Jonuz Musliu, an ethnic Albanian rebel leader-turned politician.

Alien smuggling ring: A court in Hong Kong sentenced a man to four years in prison for his part in a smuggling ring held responsible for the deaths of 58 illegal Chinese immigrants in Britain three years ago.

District Court Deputy Judge Tong Man jailed Lam Hei-kit on Friday, said spokeswoman Glenis Leong.

Tong said Lam, 29, had been a key player in financing and arranging documents for the 58 victims who suffocated in a truck in June 2000 in Dover, the South China Morning Post reported.

Hours after the discovery of the bodies, two deposits totaling \$348,000 were put in Lam's bank accounts, the newspaper said.

Rail strike in Britain: Thousands of workers at Britain's largest rail freight company went on strike for the second time in a week Saturday.

The train drivers began a 24-hour walkout at 3 p.m. as part of a dispute over pay and work conditions. Talks last week made little progress.

About 2,500 drivers participated and English, Welsh and Scottish railways had to cancel about 200 trains. The Aslef and Rail, Maritime and Transport unions held a similar strike last weekend.

War on terrorism

Terror suspect's trial: A federal judge in Alexandria, Va., is considering a government request to halt proceedings against Sept. 11 conspiracy defendant Zacarias Moussaoui until an appellate court has ruled on national security issues.

A crucial question is whether to allow the defense to receive statements by a suspected al-Qaida mastermind now in captivity, a government official who insisted on anonymity said Friday.

The captive is Ramzi Binalshibh, who the indictment alleges was in contact with Moussaoui and was a key figure in the Hamburg, Germany, cell that planned the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center.

New York security: Warning that terrorists may once again have New York in the crosshairs, Gov. George Pataki and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced beefed-up security at bridges, tunnels and spots where crowds gather: airports, subways and certain public buildings.

But Bloomberg and Pataki urged New Yorkers to carry on with business as usual.

The governor and mayor spoke Friday after the Bush administration raised the national terror alert from yellow to orange.

Specialized units of the state police and the National Guard were activated, the governor said. Some would focus on biological or chemical threats, he added.

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A crucial question is whether to allow the defense to receive statements by a suspected al-Qaida mastermind now in captivity, a government official who insisted on anonymity said Friday. The Bush administration's reluctance to allow the statements in a public trial could trigger a decision to move the case to a secret, military tribunal.

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burg, Germany, cell that planned the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center.

Nation

Artificial-heart recipient: Tom Christerson, the longest-living recipient of a fully self-contained artificial heart, spent his final hours among family and friends before dying in his sleep.

Christerson died Friday afternoon at Jewish Hospital, where he received the plastic-and-titanium device 512 days ago. He was 71.

Abiomed Inc. of Danvers, Mass., the company that manufactures the AbioCor heart, said the cause of death was the "wearout of an internal membrane" of the device.

Christerson, a retired tire dealer, became the world's second recipient of the AbioCor device in a surgery Sept. 13, 2001.

Columbia's final seconds: A New Mexico tracking station that recorded the final seconds of the space shuttle Columbia has only 1 second of data that wasn't recorded elsewhere, but it could be a very important second, the station's director said.

NASA's Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System, at the edge of the White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico, was collecting information from Columbia as it reentered Earth's atmosphere last week and disintegrated.

That second could contain information on the position of the shuttle just before it began to tumble and break up, said James Gavura, station director.

Dentist on trial: A dentist who is accused of killing her cheating husband with a Mercedes-Benz testified that "everything seemed like a dream" when she ran him over in a hotel parking lot.

A weeping Clara Harris told jurors she was aiming at his lover's luxury sport utility vehicle and did not mean to kill him.

While trying to smash the SUV, she said, "I think I closed my eyes."

"After that, I didn't know who was driving," Harris testified Friday at her murder trial. "Everything seemed like a dream."

Prosecutors say Harris, 45, intentionally ran down her husband last July after confronting him at the hotel with his lover. A medical examiner has testified the orthodontist was run over at least twice.

Clara Harris said she had been working tirelessly to save the 10-year marriage since learning of his affair the week before, quitting her job so she could have sex with him three times a night, cook his favorite meals and schedule breast enhancement surgery.

Military

U-2 crash site cleanup: U.S. Air Force officials finished cleaning up the site where a U-2S reconnaissance plane crashed Jan. 26 and released control of the area back to Hwaseong city officials on Wednesday, according to an Osan Air Base news release.

The U-2S crashed in Hwaseong, about six miles west of Osan, after its pilot safely ejected. Base officials won't name the pilot, who was treated for a minor back injury but released from Osan's medical facility last week, they said.

Four South Koreans were injured in the accident.

The Air Force took soil samples to test for possible contamination, according to base officials.

Officials said the investigation is ongoing. **Marine's accidental drowning:** The drowning of a Marine in a Naha river last weekend has been ruled an alcohol-related accident by Okinawa police.

Lance Cpl. Daniel A. Mills, 22, drowned in the Gabu River after falling into the narrow stream around 5:40 a.m. on Feb. 1, a police spokesman said.

The spokesman said autopsy and blood tests indicated Mills had consumed a significant amount of alcohol and was intoxicated before the fall.

Police have ruled out foul play in Mills' death.

"There were no external injuries," the police spokesman said. "Also we believe there was no motive for him to commit suicide. We concluded that he had fallen into the stream by accident."

From staff and wire reports

Space-A plans expansion

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Beginning April 1, for a one-year trial, the U.S. Air Mobility Command will bring space-available travels to families who travel with their sponsors within the continental United States, officials said.

Space-A flights will be available to dependents of active-duty members and retirees — and those members will have the same eligibility category as their sponsors, said Lt. Col. Darcy Lilley, chief of passenger policy for AMC.

The travels have been available to folks, on flexible schedules, wanting to travel from the States overseas and to those overseas, but not within the United States.

The yearlong trial will determine if the stateside program has an adverse affect on AMC's facilities, manpower and active-duty travel availability, Lilley said during a phone interview from the command's headquarters at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

AMC prioritizes Space-A travelers in seven categories. Highest to lowest, the priority list is:

- Members traveling on emergency leave

- Members taking environmental or morale leave from austere assignments

- Active-duty members traveling, with or without family

- Unaccompanied active-duty families

- Student dependents

- Retirees and, if going overseas, their spouses

- Drilling reservists and National Guard personnel

There are some restrictions to the trial program. Space-A seats are for families traveling with their active-duty sponsors who must be on leave or have a pass, and remain in that status, while awaiting travel and throughout the entire travel period.

Retirees may sign up for the program 60 days in advance, but only after the test period begins April 1.

More information is available on the Internet at:

<http://public.scott.af.mil/index.html>

Rumsfeld scolds France, Germany

BY ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

MUNICH, Germany — In a jab at major U.S. allies in Europe, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Saturday countries such as France and Germany that favor giving Iraq another chance to disarm are undermining what slim chance may exist to avoid war.

"There are those who counsel that we should delay preparations" for war against Iraq, Rumsfeld said.

"Ironically, that approach could well make war more likely, not less, because delaying preparations sends a signal of uncertainty," he said in the opening address at an international conference on security policy.

President Bush said he will not wait much longer before moving against Saddam Hussein, declaring in his weekly radio address that the Iraqi leader is wasting a last opportunity to come clean.

Rumsfeld said "there is no chance" Saddam will disarm voluntarily or flee his country if given yet another opportunity to comply with the U.N. Security Council resolution from November that demands Iraq's complete disarmament.

Thousands more American forces are converging on the Persian Gulf region in anticipation of a decision by Bush,

within days or weeks, to invade Iraq and oust Saddam. Also, Turkey's top civilian and military leaders reportedly agreed Saturday to let the United States send 38,000 troops to the country to open a northern front should there be war with Iraq.

On Munich's snowy streets, about 14,000 people staged protests against U.S. policy on Iraq.

"Today Munich says 'yes' to peace and 'no' to war," said Roman Catholic Bishop Engelbert Siebler.

Rumsfeld said Saddam has time to avert war but should not be given another U.N. reprieve.

"We all hope for a peaceful resolution," Rumsfeld said at the 39th Munich Conference on Security, which attracted lawmakers, policy officials, military leaders and private analysts from the United States, Europe and Asia.

"But the one chance for a peaceful resolution is to make clear that free nations are prepared to use force if necessary — that the world is united and, while reluctant, is willing to act."

In response to Rumsfeld's remarks, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer made an impassioned plea for patience with Iraq and said the German public sees no justification for going to war.

"We must not accept the logic of a military campaign,"

Fischer said. "We must give the inspectors more time."

In Berlin, a German government official said his country is working with France on "specific peaceful alternatives."

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that the French-German plan includes placing U.N. troops across Iraq, conducting reconnaissance flights over the country and tripling the number of U.N. weapons inspectors.

Sergei Ivanov, the Russian defense minister whose government opposes early military action against Iraq, told the Munich conference the main focus should be on fighting international terrorism of all kinds.

Some of the harshest words came from Sen. John McCain, who led a U.S. congressional delegation to the conference.

McCain, a Republican, hammered France and Germany for blocking a NATO effort to plan for ways of defending alliance Turkey from potential attacks by Iraq in the event of war.

Turkey has requested such assistance, and the United States is strongly in favor of it.

McCain accused the Germans and French of "calculated self-interest." He said their actions had caused a "terrible injury" to NATO and exposed their "vacuous posturing."

U.N. inspectors open new talks with Iraq

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.N. disarmament chiefs went face to face with their Iraqi counterparts Saturday in "useful" and "very substantial" talks to find out what Baghdad did with stores of anthrax, nerve gas and other forbidden arms.

After more than four hours of meetings, U.N. nuclear watchdog Mohamed ElBaradei reported the Iraqis had presented unspecified "explanations on some of the issues." The discussions resume Sunday.

The talks were pivotal, but they were "not the last chance" for peace, ElBaradei said, clearly seeking to counter talk in Washington that the time for diplomacy had all but run out.

ElBaradei and chief U.N. arms inspector Hans Blix were looking for quick Iraqi concessions on practical matters in the disarmament efforts, such as clearance to fly American U-2 reconnaissance planes in support of their inspections.

But they also wanted more:

documents, testimony or other evidence to clear up discrepancies in Iraq's accounting for weapons of mass destruction produced and weapons destroyed more than a decade ago.

"If they don't have the orders [to destroy weapons], if they don't have the paper, give us the people who were involved to talk to," one U.N. delegate said before the first meeting, in a Foreign Ministry conference room above a boulevard dotted with heroic statues of President Saddam Hussein.

GIs aware of tensions and are ready to fight

Stars and Stripes

RODRIGUEZ RANGE
COMPLEX, South Korea — Soldiers with the 1st Battalion of the 72nd Tank Regiment say it's too hard to hear North Korea rattling its sabers when U.S. soldiers fire rounds from their M1A1 Abrams tanks on the training range.

The soldiers, who would be on the front lines if North Korea invaded, are in the middle of a 25-day training exercise in which the tank crews must qualify on a set of tasks. And while the tankers work their way through increasingly complicated scenarios, tensions continue to increase with North Korea.

"None of these guys was drafted," said Maj. Mike Hester, battalion operations officer and tank commander. "They joined, they know the risks and they're ready."

"But I'm an officer. Don't ask me, ask them."

The soldiers say they're aware of the stress between

the United States and North Korea, but it's not something they really worry about.

Spc. Jake Rocero, company armorer, said the soldiers watch the news and read the papers.

"But to us, this is just our job," he said about being on the front lines. "We just do the best we can and stay ready to roll."

Rocero said most of the troops get calls from family members in the United States who worry about what they're seeing and hearing in the news.

He said they tell their friends and families that, "It's not something that we worry about at our level. All we can do is be ready."

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Purcell, a master gunner with Charlie Company, leads 19 soldiers in his platoon. He said his soldiers aren't worried about politics, but they know their mission.

"And that's what they're out here training for," Purcell said.

Every soldier who spoke to Stars and Stripes said the same thing: "Ready to fight tonight."

It's something they hear from Lt. Col. Chris Queen, battalion commander.

"We have to stay ready," said Queen, sitting in an observation booth on a ridge watching his troops work their way through the narrow valley, firing at the targets as they popped up on the side of a mountain.

"You never know. We could wake up the next morning and he attacks," Queen added, referring to North Korean leader Kim Jong Il.

Sgt. Marlow Phillip was new to the battalion: He had been in South Korea for only five days. He followed the news about North Korea while in the United States but wasn't overly concerned when he came here.

"I don't think anything is going to happen," he said. "The focus is on Iraq."

Sailor honored

Petty Officer 1st Class Marc Medina, a machinist's mate from Naval Support Activity Naples, has been named Naples Regional Sailor of the Year.

The Naples region includes Fleet Air Mediterranean, La Maddalena, NSA Gaeta and U.S. Naval Hospital Naples.

Medina will move on to the next round of competition at U.S. Naval Forces Europe, where he will face regional winners from Sigonella, Sicily; Keflavik, Iceland; and Rota, Spain.

"He's a poster child," said Willie Clouse, Naples command master chief, who praised the 35-year-old sailor's ability to adapt to a work environment far different from what he was trained for.

As a machinist's mate, Medina was trained to work in the bowels of a ship on the power plant. But at Naples, he's assigned to a Seabee construction unit.

After London, there are two more stages before the Navy Shore Sailor of the Year is selected, an award that guarantees promotion to chief petty officer. The Navy also awards Pacific Fleet, Atlantic Fleet and Reserve Sailor of the Year awards, with the same promotion.

North Korea warns of 'nuclear disasters'

The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea warned Friday that reported U.S. moves to dispatch reinforcements around Korea could lead to "horrible nuclear disasters" while Washington said it was preparing for any contingencies.

For days, North Korea has appeared to be creating an atmosphere of crisis, accusing the United States of deploying reinforcements in the region to invade the impoverished country.

U.S. officials say any discussions of troop movements would be meant to deter North Korea, not to foreshadow an invasion.

Still, North Korea fears that Washington will become more aggressive toward the communist nation if the U.S. military conducts a successful war in Iraq.

"If the U.S. moves to bolster aggression troops are unchecked, the whole land of Korea will be reduced to ashes and the Koreans will not escape horrible nuclear disasters," North Korea's official news agency, KCNA, said Friday.

President Bush said he called Chinese President Jiang Zemin on Friday morning and "reminded him that we have a joint responsibility to uphold the goal ... of a nuclear weapons-free [Korean] peninsula."

Bush repeated that he believed the situation on Korea can still be resolved peacefully but notably ratcheted up the U.S. position by raising the suggestion of the use of a military strike.

"We will continue to work diplomatically to make it very clear to Kim Jong Il that

should he expect any kind of aid and help for his people that he must comply with the world's demands that he not develop a nuclear weapon," Bush said.

However, he added: "All options are on the table of course."

By citing "all options," Bush was reminding North Korea that the United States has not ruled out the use of military force.

U.S. officials have spoken before about their ability to respond to any potential hostile action by North Korea, in part to dispel any hopes Pyongyang may have about taking advantage of Bush's focus on Iraq.

North Korea's statement Friday was issued by the Committee for Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, a government agency in charge of relations with South Korea.

Navy head leaving

WASHINGTON — Acting Secretary of the Navy Susan Morrissey Livingstone is stepping down from the Navy's top administrative post, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced Friday.

Hansford T. Johnson, assistant secretary of the Navy for installations and environment, is to replace Livingstone.

Livingstone, who has served as undersecretary of the Navy since July 2001, was appointed as acting secretary when Gordon England left the position Jan. 24 for the Homeland Security Department.

Livingstone had previously asked not to be considered to succeed England, but will continue in the post until Johnson takes over the reins.

Rumsfeld said Livingstone "served the department with great distinction."

From staff and wire reports

Okinawa officials boycott Marine safety demo

Stars and Stripes

CAMP SCHWAB, Okinawa — It was supposed to be a briefing to ease the fears of Okinawa officials over safety during live-fire training into a mountainside on Range 10.

But the officials stayed away, claiming they don't want to be assured training at the range can be safely resumed — they want the range closed. Period.

In July, Okinawans were alarmed when a pineapple farmer on the other side of the mountain claimed he was almost hit by a stray machine gun round from the range. Training was suspended while an investigation was conducted by Okinawa police.

The investigation remains open, although police admit there is no telling when a spent .50-caliber round dug up from the farmer's field was actually fired. The bullet was never turned over to Marine officials for testing and Okinawa police were unable to match the bullet with any of the machine guns used by the Marines.

In Naha on Friday morning, Okinawa Gov. Keiichi Inamine said he decided not attend the briefing because he was opposed to resuming the training.

"The training exposes local residents to danger," Inamine said. "We understand that the safety briefing is a step for the military to resume the firing at the range. We, therefore, decided not to participate."

Earlier in the week the Nago City Council voted to shun the briefing.

"It is the position of the council to demand a cessation of training at the range," a Nago City official said.

On Thursday, members of the Prefectural Assembly's Special Committee on Military Affairs voted to boycott the briefing.

"We regret that they chose not to come," Marine Col. Ron Yowell, community relations chief for Marine Corps Bases Japan, said during the briefing. "Believe it or not, the Marine Corps cares what Okinawans think."

Shuttle pinholes may be trouble

BY MATT CRENSON

The Associated Press

Studies performed by NASA engineers during the 1990s raised the possibility that tiny pinholes on the space shuttle orbiters' wings could be enlarged by hot gases during re-entry, but concluded that the problem was unlikely to endanger the spacecraft or their crews.

Yet with increasing focus on the leading edge of Columbia's left wing in the days since the spacecraft broke up over Texas, interest in the pinholes may be renewed.

NASA officials declined to say Thursday whether they considered pinholes a possible cause of the Columbia accident. Engineers who have studied the pinholes for NASA and its contractors said they could not discuss the shuttle.

The microscopic pits were first discovered in July 1992, during inspections performed after Columbia's 12th flight. Inspections of the other orbiters also found the holes developing in the silicon carbide coating that protects the heat-resistant material on the leading edge of each orbiter's wings.

The holes generally developed after 10 to 15 flights, but were "worse" on Columbia's wings, according to a July 1999 presentation made by Donald M. Curry of NASA and David W. Johnson of Lockheed Martin.

Though no larger in diameter than a human hair, the holes were of concern because of the 3,000-degree temperatures that part of the shuttle must withstand during atmospheric re-entry.

"The chemical reactions which lead to pinhole formation are expected to occur when the shuttle wing leading edges are hottest — during launch and re-entry," NASA engineer Nathan S. Jacobson wrote in a 1999 paper.

According to NASA technical reports, the troublesome

NASA hopes to recover secret encryption device

The Associated Press

BRONSON, Texas — Debris crews combed an area along the Texas-Louisiana border for the wreckage of a secret device that allowed the encryption of communications between NASA and the shuttle Columbia.

NASA spokesman John Ira Petty said Friday that finding the box was a high priority because officials feared its technology could be used "to send bogus signals" to the other shuttles during future flights.

"We are searching for all debris. Certainly we would like to recover this one," Petty said.

Officials did not explain why they focused their search for the device on an area around Bronson, which is on the southern edge of

the main debris field in East Texas.

David Williams, an on-scene search coordinator with the Environmental Protection Agency, said searchers spent Thursday in an area near Bronson.

"They said they came out of there with very little," he said.

Williams' search party found a black box with a serial number about five miles east of Bronson, "but it didn't appear to be the black box NASA was looking for," he said.

Bronson residents said about 80 National Guard members arrived in camouflage-hued trucks and were accompanied by state troopers as they searched the woods Thursday.

"They were everywhere," said Beth Walker.

pinholes appear to have been caused in part by tiny flakes of paint peeling off the tower that holds the shuttle and its booster rocket before launch. Experiments showed that zinc in the paint could corrode the silicon carbide coating that protects the heat-shielding material on the leading edge of the shuttle's wing.

The report also concluded that the corrosive salt air at Cape Canaveral may also contribute to pinhole formation. Columbia sat on the pad for 39 days before its final launch, not an atypically long time.

Columbia's last flight was its second since a refurbishment performed in late 1999. Between missions, crews routinely inspect and repair any damage to the shuttle's heat-resistant skin.

Columbia came apart at the point during its descent through the atmosphere when the wings' leading

edges can approach 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit, the highest temperatures a shuttle must endure in flight.

As NASA's investigation into the Feb. 1 accident proceeds, attention has centered on the leading edge of the shuttle's left wing. Sensors embedded in the wing failed about eight minutes before the shuttle broke up. Soon afterward, the craft's automatic pilot system began compensating for increased drag on the left side. About that time, a camera at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico snapped a photograph of the shuttle that appears to show damage to the left wing's leading edge.

"I can't really make a judgment on what the image actually shows," NASA Deputy Associate Administrator Mike Kostelnik said Friday. "But it is during the time period when we're getting these anomalies."

Shuttle wing debris most significant find

BY ANGELA K. BROWN
The Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — A 2-foot-long section of one of Columbia's wings found near Fort Worth is the most significant discovery yet in the search for clues to the shuttle's destruction.

The wing section was recovered at the far western edge of the known debris field, which stretches more than 200 miles from Fort Worth across East Texas and Louisiana. It wasn't immediately known if it was part of the important left wing, where several heat sensors failed in the shuttle's final moments.

"Examining where debris fell and where it was gathered is going to be very important as far as piecing the puzzle together as far as what happened at what altitude," shuttle program manager Ron Dittmore said Friday.

The shuttle was 16 minutes from a landing in Florida when it broke apart over the Southwest, killing all seven astronauts.

Dittmore said Friday that no shuttle debris had yet been confirmed west of Texas.

The wing section recovered has 18 inches of wing structure and 26 to 27 inches of carbon-composite panel, which reinforces the leading edges of space shuttle wings for thermal protection during the searing heat of atmospheric reentry, which reaches as high as 3,000 degrees.

Since the Columbia broke apart high over Texas on Feb. 1, NASA has focused on the left wing, where sensors had showed rising temperatures before failing entirely.

Authorities planned to take the found wing section to a military installation in Fort Worth.

In East Texas, searchers prepared to return to Toledo Bend Reservoir along the Louisiana state line to examine several large objects that sonar scans had located. Area residents had reported seeing falling debris the size of a compact car.

Buoy markers were placed where searchers believe debris may be resting on the lake bottom, but gusty winds kept divers from entering the water, officials said. A Forest Service spokesman said dive teams would return to the lake Monday.

Also Friday, an amnesty deadline ended for scavengers who picked up parts of the shuttle.

U.S. Attorney Matthew Orwig said response to the amnesty was overwhelming, with hundreds of pieces turned in since it began Wednesday. Federal prosecutors said anyone found with shuttle debris after Friday would face prosecution.

Two people charged earlier for allegedly keeping shuttle pieces face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Nacogdoches County Sheriff Tom Kerss said that once the deadline passed he would give the FBI about 75 names, compiled from tips by residents, of people who might have shuttle parts.

"We will have some search teams begin visiting flea markets," he said.

Searchers on foot again fanned out through the East Texas pine forests, helped by dry weather Friday.

The discovery of the wing piece — about 250 miles from Toledo Bend Reservoir — underscored the size of the Columbia debris field and could indicate an increase in attention on its western fringe.

Michael Kostelnik, a deputy associate NASA administrator, said NASA believes there is "a substantial amount of material" around Fort Worth and up to 150 miles west and northwest of the city.

In all, more than 12,000 individual pieces of debris have been found and their locations cataloged, officials said.

The pieces could arrive as early as Tuesday at Kennedy Space Center in Florida, where they will be laid out in a storage hangar on a grid marking off the entire shuttle, NASA spokeswoman Lisa Malone said.

Some stores now taxing online sales voluntarily

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Some major retailers this week began voluntarily charging online sales taxes in 37 states and the District of Columbia, a move that could reshape the way business is done on the Web.

Participating brick-and-mortar retailers, such as Wal-Mart, Toys "R" Us and Target, hope their first steps will help bolster the states' effort to mandate online sales taxes, leveling the playing field between themselves and Internet-only rivals.

Under current laws, catalog companies and pure online retailers only have to charge sales taxes in states where they have operations, such as a warehouse or distribution facility.

Nationwide brick-and-mortar retailers say this puts them at a disadvantage in states where catalog and Internet-only companies do not have operations.

"We can't have a system that discriminates [against] some vendors in favor of others," said Frank Shafroth, director of state-federal relations for the National Governors Association.

The major retailers said the move also helps them integrate their online and brick-and-mortar operations.

The states, meanwhile, are eager to plug their budget shortfalls with help from Internet sales taxes.

The attorney who represent-

ed the merchants, John Coalson of the Atlanta firm Alston & Bird, said he expects five more states to join in the 37-state program begun this week. He would not name the states.

However, representatives of 34 states and the District of Columbia met in Tampa last month to discuss taxing Internet sales.

The states represented include: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Alaska, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire, and Oregon do not collect sales tax.

Representatives for pure online retailers and catalog companies called the pact a non-starter.

"This is just a marketing ploy," said Lou Mastria, a spokesman at the Direct Marketing Association, which represents catalogs and pure online retailers. He believes brick-and-mortar retailers should be forced to charge taxes online in any state where they have a store.

Mastria also said that pure online players and small catalog companies do not have the resources to handle complicated state and local tax laws.

Cheney's meetings to stay private

WASHINGTON — The investigative arm of Congress is giving up its court battle against Vice President Dick Cheney, who has refused to disclose the industry contacts he and his aides had in formulating the Bush administration's energy plan.

The General Accounting Office on Friday declined to appeal a recent court ruling in favor of Cheney, leaving the fight to private groups that say the Bush White House must reveal which business executives and lobbyists had a role in influencing the plan.

The administration is calling for expanded oil and gas drilling on public land and easing regulatory barriers.

Private groups pursuing information about the Cheney task force pledged to press on with their lawsuits.

From The Associated Press

At least 25 dead in Bogota blast

BY ANDREW SELSKY

The Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia — A car bomb tore through an elite social club in Bogota on Friday, killing at least 25 people, wounding more than 150 and raising fears that Colombia's leftist rebels were making good on threats to attack the country's wealthy ruling class.

The explosion rocked the 11-story El Nopal Club in the nation's capital, blowing brick and mortar onto a busy avenue, collapsing floors and starting a fire that burned for about two hours Friday night before fire crews brought it under control.

Though officials had said they held little hope of finding anyone alive in the wreckage, rescuers pulled a 12-year-old girl, Maria Camila Garcia, out of the rubble about midday Saturday, Attor-

ney General Luis Camilo Osorio said, after touring the scene.

The girl, who was found between the third and fourth floors, suffered only minor injuries, Osorio said.

Her uncle, Mauricio Mugno, said both her parents had been killed in the blast.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, had said several months ago it intended to attack Colombia's elite. The rebels recently have brought their four-decade war from the countryside into the cities.

The bomb, packed with 330 pounds of explosives, was placed in a car in the third floor garage, Bogota Mayor Antanas Mockus said.

Searchers picked through the wreckage Saturday, looking for victims. Family members of missing employees

and patrons of the club gathered nearby, holding photographs of their loved ones.

Witnesses had said children were to put on a ballet show at the club Friday night, and several children were among the injured.

President Alvaro Uribe, who has promised to crack down on the leftist insurgency, visited the scene.

"This tragedy is the daughter of the mix of drugs and violence," he said. "While many countries of the world tolerate the consumption of drugs ... they produce tragedies like what occurred tonight in the streets of Bogota."

It was the worst terrorist attack in Colombia since Pablo Escobar's Medellin drug cartel orchestrated a wave of bombings and assassinations in the 1980s and early 1990s in Colombia's cities to avoid his extradition to the United States.

Cease-fire discussed

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon met recently with Palestinian parliament speaker Ahmed Qureia, Israeli and Palestinian officials confirmed Friday.

The meeting was Sharon's first with the senior Palestinian official in about a year.

Palestinian officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the meeting took place on Wednesday, a week after Sharon's hard-line Likud party won a landslide victory in general elections on Jan. 28.

The Palestinian officials said the meeting lasted less than two hours, and the two discussed a possible cease-fire and ways of solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Dov Weisglass, director-general of the Israeli prime minister's office, also was present at the meeting, the officials said.

Israeli officials would confirm only that such a meeting took place, and that the two discussed the current conflict.

Mysterious 'spy' speaks out about N. Korea

BY MARI YAMAGUCHI

The Associated Press

KASHIWA, Japan — He wears a wig, refuses to have his face photographed and says he has moved 12 times in the past three years. He calls himself Kenki Aoyama, but that's a made-up name.

For decades, he says, he was an engineer developing missile technology for North Korea. After that, his story continues, he worked as a spy in China, stealing industrial secrets. Now, he's on the run — but he hasn't been silent.

Since returning in 1999 to his native Japan, Aoyama has been telling Japanese officials — and the public — about their secretive communist neighbor, both as a paid informer and as the author of two popular books on his life in North Korea.

Aoyama says his main reason for speaking out instead of lying low is to warn that North Korea poses a serious threat.

Aoyama strongly advocates a hard line against Pyongyang, and says it is already too late to stop it from becoming a nuclear power.

He claims North Korea's nuclear weapons programs began in the 1960s, when dozens of his classmates and thousands of experts were sent to Yongbyon, a major nuclear facility north of Pyongyang.

"I'm convinced that North Korea has already made A-bombs," he said in a recent interview near Tokyo. "No matter how slow they were, there must be several of them by now."

He also claims North Korea provided missile technology to Pakistan, Iran and Iraq in exchange for nuclear weapons technology and 30-40 experts regularly visited each other's country. After the fall of Soviet Union, North Korea offered dozens of Russian scientists jobs, he added.

A Japan-born Korean, Aoyama left for North Korea in 1960 at age 21.

He was among 93,000 Koreans, most of them originally from the South, who went to North Korea between 1959 to 1985 on a North Korean government-backed repatriation campaign, hoping to escape the poverty and discrimination they face in Japan.

He says he graduated in 1962 from a Pyongyang technical college with a degree in mechanical engineering and began work as a researcher and teacher at a science institute, where he conducted a national geological survey and developed missile launch pads.

Toshio Miyatsuka, a professor at Yamanashi Gakuin University who specializes in North Korea, said most of what Aoyama says is trustworthy, except for some details of his personal data.

"What he says about North Korea is mostly accurate, the kind of things that only someone who has lived there can tell," he said.

Suspect's motive?

ANKARA, Turkey — A man who tried to hijack a Turkish Airlines flight apparently wanted to take the plane to Moscow to see his girlfriend.

The 28-year-old Turk took two flight attendants hostage after the plane from Ankara landed Friday in Istanbul. He told them he had explosives and asked to be flown to Russia. The passengers had already left the aircraft.

The hostage-taking ended when police stormed the plane. No one was injured. Ali Ilker Urbak was detained. Police said he was drunk and carrying candles bundled in the shape of dynamite.

Urbak first told police he was protesting U.S. plans for a war on Iraq, the Anatolia news agency said Saturday. Later he said he wanted to take the plane to see his girlfriend in Moscow, the Turkish agency said, quoting police.

From The Associated Press

Not all movies are for all ages

BY RICK EMERT AND
LEAH BOWER

Stars and Stripes

Deciding what's right for children to watch seems to be a tricky question. Many say it should be up to a child's parent. Others suggest that certain rules should be enforced across the board.

Indeed, different rules apply to who can see what and when at base theaters.

There are those parents who do not even allow their children to watch R-rated movies at home, let alone send them into a theater to see one.

"I have an 8-year-old, and I would not let him see an R-rated movie at all," said Erica Harris, a teller at the Bamberg Commissary in Germany. "There is too much violence in the world already, and kids are very impressionable at that age. I don't want him to think that all the world is about is violence, sex and drugs."

But not everyone agrees.

"If the movie is rated R only because of language, I would my let my [teenage] daughter see it without me," said Russell Cunningham, groundskeeper for the Bamberg golf

course. "If the movie has nudity, that's a different story."

Parents are not the only group divided on what is appropriate for children at the movies. The Army and Air Force Exchange Service and the Navy Motion Picture Services, which operate movie theaters on assigned installations, have different opinions and different rules when it comes to what movies children can see.

AAFES allows children under 17 to see R-rated movies unaccompanied as long as a parent purchases the tickets. Navy Motion Pictures Services does not.

In fact, the Capodichino, Italy, Navy Motion Picture Services' theater has taken it a step further: It does not allow any children under 10 into an R-rated movie — accompanied or not, according to Michele DeLuca, the theater's manager.

However, AAFES said decisions like determining what a child should and shouldn't watch is best made by the parents, not the theater.

"We are not in the business of determining what is suitable programming for children under 17," said Maj.

Mitch Edgar, a spokesman for AAFES-Europe, which oversees theaters on Army and Air Force installations. "Parents must purchase the tickets, but they are not necessarily required to attend the show."

But one of the reasons the Navy theaters restrict children under 10 from seeing R-rated movies is for consideration of the entire audience, DeLuca said.

"We don't want to have very young kids in the rated R movies running up and down the aisles or crying. We made the rule based on disturbing kids, rumors and people's comments."

For example, the Capodichino theater took additional precautions before the Jan. 10 screening of rapper Eminem's film "8 Mile."

The R-rated film, which is loosely based on the rapper's life in Detroit, includes very explicit language, sexual themes, drug use and some violence.

"We know it is rated R, and we'll be enforcing a little bit extra," DeLuca said before the screening. "We already are checking IDs. We normally check IDs."

In the Naples community, however, some teens don't

agree with the theater's policy.

"Your parents should be able to determine if you can go," said 15-year-old Evangeline Huff, a Naples High School sophomore said. "My parents know how mature I am."

Jeanette Martinez, a Naples family member and mother of three children 13 and under, said that parents should accompany their children to R-rated movies, but added that the theater's additional, local rules were too stringent.

"I don't agree with the policy," Martinez said. "[Some movies] use just some foul language, and my son knows he can't repeat that anyway."

Whether or not the parents attend should not be based strictly on the film's rating, but on the film's content, added Cunningham from Bamberg.

"It depends on what's in the movie," Cunningham said. "If it has sex or nudity, then no, I wouldn't let my daughter go unaccompanied or at all. If the R is for language, that's a different story. Kids hear foul language all the time. I think they can deal with that in a movie. I would let her go alone if it was only for language."

'Godfather' sequel

Florida novelist Mark Winegardner is a made man these days.

Director of Florida State University's creative writing program, Winegardner has been hand-picked by Random House and the literary estate of Mario Puzo to write a sequel to Puzo's 1969 best-seller, "The Godfather." The novel has sold 20 million copies and was made into a classic film.

"All I need to do now is to write a good book, but that's how I approach every book," Winegardner, 41, said.

The official announcement was made Friday on the NBC's "Today" program. The sequel, titled "The Godfather Returns," is tentatively scheduled for publication in the fall of 2004.

Recovery recounted

Adam Taliaferro's recovery from a paralyzing neck injury seemed made for television. Soon, it will be.

The Football Network, a national

Faces 'n' places

cable channel planning to launch in the fall, has signed a deal to make a movie about Taliaferro, whose neck was broken when he tried to make a tackle against Ohio State two years ago.

Doctors feared Taliaferro, then a freshman cornerback for Penn State from Voorhees, N.J., would never walk again. But he was released from the hospital barely three months after his injury; soon after that, he was walking unassisted.

In August 2001, less than a year after his injury, Taliaferro donned his uniform and led the Nittany Lions on to the field for their home opener.

Taliaferro, 21, is now a student coach for Penn State.

Marty Appel, a spokesman for The Football Network, called Taliaferro's story "inspiring." He said the project did not yet have a production company and casting had not begun. The movie is tentatively scheduled to air in 2004.

Big break for Baltimore

A Disney movie starring John Travolta is set to begin filming in Baltimore next month.

"Ladder 49" could be the biggest feature film ever made in the city, said Baltimore movie maven Jed Dietz, head of the Maryland Film Festival and founder of the Producers Club of Maryland.

Baltimore was chosen over several other cities, including Toronto and Philadelphia, to be the primary location for the thriller. Mayor Martin O'Malley helped campaign to win the movie.

The movie, which also stars Joaquin Phoenix, is the story of a veteran firefighter who looks back over his professional life, heroic career and family life while trapped in a deadly blaze.

"It is a big production, potentially one of the biggest we've ever had," Dietz said. "It is a great tribute to Baltimore that what [director Jay Russell] saw was authentic."

From wire services

McGrady will try to give Jordan start

Eastern teammate wants Wizards star on court for tipoff

BY RICK GANO

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Tracy McGrady's consistency is reflected in his NBA-best 30.4 scoring average. He can be persistent, too, especially when it comes to honoring Michael Jordan.

McGrady will try for a second time to give his starting spot in Sunday's NBA All-Star Game to Jordan, who'll be making his 14th and final appearance.

"He opened a lot of doors for guys like myself and other guys. It's all about respect and 'Thank you,'" McGrady said Friday.

Jordan has already said no thanks to McGrady and Allen Iverson when they offered to give their spots in the Eastern Conference starting lineup. McGrady planned to take another shot at persuading Jordan before Sunday night's tipoff.

"I hope he does, I think it will be great, not only for myself but for the fans as well and for the game," McGrady said. "We are going to do something and try to convince him as a team. That's all we can do and if he doesn't take it, we tried."

It will be the first All-Star appearance for Houston Rockets center Yao Ming.

Vince Carter, McGrady's distant cousin and former Toronto Raptors teammate, was voted as a starter by the fans, even though knee problems have limited him to 15 games this season.

Carter, like Jordan a former star at North Carolina, has taken a different approach than McGrady or Iverson, disagreeing with those who say he's the one who should forfeit his starting role.

"There are a lot of guys who could step aside," Carter said. "I feel I owe these fans. They had enough be-

lief in me and felt I should be out there as a starter. So why should I slap these fans in the face, even though you had the courage and guts to vote for me?"

"I understand the other side. But it's one person — who is the greatest, don't get me wrong — or a million-plus that is going to be disappointed," Carter added. "I think the fans are what make it."

McGrady sympathized with Carter's position.

"He's in a tough situation whatever he does," McGrady said.

"If he gives the spot up, everybody is going to say, 'Oh look at Vince, he's trying to make himself look good now.' If he doesn't give it up, which he said he wasn't, they'll say, 'He's a bad guy and doesn't have any respect.'"

Perhaps, though, if Jordan doesn't start, he'd get a bigger ovation than he would by taking the floor with all the other starters at the beginning of the game.

Regardless, everyone will be watching and reflecting on what made Jordan so special.

Jordan turns 40 on Feb. 17. Asked what he'll be doing at that age, Amare Stoudemire — the 20-year-old Phoenix Suns rookie who will compete in the dunk contest and the rookie game — shakes his head. Will he still be playing? "At 40?" Stoudemire says with a laugh. "I don't know. I've got a lot of time to figure out what I'm going to do."

One thing is for sure: Stoudemire knows what Jordan has meant to the game and the younger generation of players.

"Without the old school, there would be no new school. They've created a good path for us," Stoudemire said.

For defending dunk champion Jason Richardson, it was Jordan's approach as much as his talent that has made him great.

"He always played every game like he was never going to play again. That's what I like most about him," Richardson said.

Jordan, who skipped Friday's media availability, has tried to downplay what is expected to be his final season. He's retired twice before and returned, but he's said this time he's quitting for good and going to go back to the Washington Wizards' front office.

He doesn't want a farewell tour, or to be the center of attention at the All-Star Game, but it's too late for that: He's going to be the subject of a TV special and a musical tribute.

Shaquille O'Neal doesn't sense that Jordan's final All-Star appearance will be an overly emotional one, just an experience many will remember.

"The only thing that will go through me is that I will be happy that I'm there, be happy I was here for this moment," O'Neal said.

"And when my kids get to an older age and we start talking about great players, I can tell them there was this guy one time named Michael Jordan, and he did this and he did that."

Outside America, the game will be broadcast in 41 languages to 212 nations and territories — including 287 million households in China. Many will be watching for one player, the 7-foot-6 starting center from the Western Conference by way of the Shanghai Sharks.

Yao wore a Team China warmup suit Friday and was trailed by some 40 television cameras.

"It's to show that I really miss my audience and friends back in China," Yao said.

The league even brought in an extra interpreter to help handle the questions from a media mob that numbered 120 by one estimate.

"This guy can handle simultaneous translations. I can't do that," said Colin Pine, Yao's regular interpreter with the Rockets.

GOLF

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Augusta National Golf Club promised to at least match last year's \$3.3 million in charitable donations despite not having television sponsors for the Masters.

The club decided in August to drop its three television sponsors to keep them out of the controversy over its all-male membership.

TV sponsors are a major source of income for the golf tournament.

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Jim Furyk birdied his final three holes for a 6-under 66 and the second-round lead at the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, moving one stroke atop a crowded leaderboard.

Furyk was at 7-under 137 after two rounds.

First-round leader Kevin Sutherland was among five players sitting one stroke back, with Davis Love III and five-time Pebble Beach champion Mark O'Meara two strokes off the pace.

Paul Stankowski, Tim Herron, Rod Pamplung and Tom Lehman joined Sutherland at 6 under.

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla. — Bobby Wadkins overcame back spasms over the final six holes to take a two-shot lead in the opening round of the Royal Caribbean Classic.

Wadkins had two bogeys and eight birdies in the first full-field event on the Champions Tour, formerly known as the Senior PGA Tour.

Wadkins' best birdie may have been his last, a two-putt from 100 feet on the par-5 No. 18 to finish two shots ahead of Christie O'Connor, who shot a 4-under 68.

Sports in brief

Television announcer Gary Koch bogeyed the last two holes to finish with a 69. He is in a five-way tie for third with Walter Morgan, Jerry McGee, David Eger and Roger Davis.

AIEA, Hawaii — Michelle Wie had them buzzing at the Hawaii Pearl Open.

Playing from the back tees, the 13-year-old from Honolulu opened with a 2-over 74 at one of the premier men's golf tournaments in Hawaii.

The only female in the field of 192, and the youngest overall, Wie felt fine until she was stung by a bunch of bees on the 11th hole.

She was finished tied for 50th, seven strokes off the lead, held by Japan tour pro Kiyoshi Murota.

HOCKEY

RALEIGH, N.C. — The slumping Carolina Hurricanes traded two-time All-Star Sami Kapanen to the Philadelphia Flyers for 1999 first-round draft pick Pavel Brendl.

Two minor leaguers were also involved in the deal. The Flyers got defenseman Ryan Bast, while Carolina acquired defenseman Bruno St. Jacques.

FOOTBALL

DENVER — Cornerback Jimmy Spencer will be a player-coach next season for the Denver Broncos.

Spencer, 33, will assist defensive backs coach David Gibbs. He has

played 11 seasons in the NFL, including the past three with the Broncos.

Player-coaches are rare in the NFL. Dan Reeves performed a similar job for the Dallas Cowboys in 1970 and '71.

SOCCER

NEW YORK — Teams in North and Central America and the Caribbean will have to play up to 20 games over three rounds in order to advance to 2006 World Cup in Germany, according to the system approved by region's soccer governing body.

For the past two World Cups, the United States had byes until the regional semifinals. The U.S. team, which has played in four straight World Cups, will start qualifying in February or March 2004, rather than in July.

TENNIS

ZAGREB, Croatia — James Blake did his job as the U.S. team's lone experienced Davis Cup player, beating Mario Ancic in straight sets to tie the first-round series against Croatia 1-1.

Blake's 6-1, 6-2, 7-6 (5) victory on the quick indoor court improved his Davis Cup record to 5-1 in singles, 8-1 overall.

The United States trailed the best-of-five series after the first match, in which Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic served 30 aces to beat Mardy Fish 7-5, 6-3, 6-4.

PARIS — Serena Williams coasted into the Gaz de France Open semifinals by beating Janette Husarova 6-3, 6-3 in

a match delayed by two spectators who walked on court.

After Williams and Husarova finished warming up, two men carrying rackets made their way on the court. Security guards hustled them away and kicked them out of the arena.

In other action, second-seeded Daniela Hantuchova lost to Elena Dementieva 7-5, 6-3, fourth-seeded Jelena Dokic was upset by Daniilidou 6-1, 6-3, and third-seeded Amelie Mauresmo beat Magui Serna 7-6 (4), 6-3.

TRACK AND FIELD

NEW YORK — Gail Devers set an American indoor record in the 60-meter hurdles at the Millrose Games, finishing in 7.78 seconds.

Stacy Dragila also reset her American record in the pole vault, jumping 15 feet, 5 3/4 inches.

Devers, a two-time Olympic champion, broke the mark of 7.81 set by Jackie Joyner-Kersey on Feb. 5, 1989.

Maurice Greene had a disappointing finish in the 60, finishing third in 6.57 behind winner and hurdle specialist Terrence Trammell (6.51) and 20-year-old Justin Gatlin (6.54), in his first post-collegiate race.

In the Wanamaker Mile, Kenya's Bernard Lagat outpaced the entire field, taking the lead midway through the race and winning easily in 4:00.36. Lagat won the Millrose in 2001 but was upset last year by countryman Laban Rotich. This year, Russia's Vyacheslav Shabunin was second in 4:01.99 and Rotich finished third in 4:02.91.

From The Associated Press

Rites of spring: Pitchers, catchers to report

Mariners get off to earliest camp start

BY BEN WALKER

The Associated Press

Mike Piazza stepped off the plane and shuddered. Like a lot of places, New York was in a deep freeze. "Man, my ears almost felt off," the Mets star said. "I'll be glad when we get going."

He's not the only one. Because with much of the country covered by snow and ice this winter, it just takes a few words to warm up baseball everywhere: It's time for pitchers and catchers to report to spring training.

The Seattle Mariners will be the first team to open camp.

They'll get going Sunday, and there's a reason for the quick start — Ichiro Suzuki, Freddy Garcia and the Mariners will play the major league opener early, on March 25 in Tokyo against Oakland.

Within a week, every team will break out the bats, the balls and the big hopes. From Florida to Arizona, from Vero Beach to Scottsdale, optimism will mix with the sun and sand.

"We are going to go all the way and win it all," boasted San Francisco's Felipe Alou, one of 10 new managers this season.

Dusty Baker, Buck Showalter and Lou Piniella also will be in different dugouts while Detroit's Alan Trammell will try managing for the first time.

All over, teams are excited, particularly with so many top players having moved. Jim Thome, Tom Glavine, Mike Hampton, Ivan Rodriguez and Jeff Kent switched sides, and the New York Yankees brought

two newcomers to the big leagues — Japanese slugger Hideki Matsui and Cuban pitcher Jose Contreras.

Plus, camps will be full of fresh young faces, guys who may sooner or later may become household names. Could the new star be 19-year-old Mets shortstop Jose Reyes, Cleveland first baseman Travis Hafner, or Phillies center fielder Marlon Byrd? So why not be enthused, especially after what the Anaheim Angels accomplished last year? Coming off a season in which they finished 41 games behind in the AL West, Mike Scioscia's bunch bounced back to beat Barry Bonds and the Giants to win the World Series.

A rookie who began the season in Triple-A, John Lackey, started Game 7 and shut down San Francisco. And a 20-year-old who opened the year in Double-A — Francisco Rodriguez — became a postseason sensation.

Yet even the fabulous K-Rod, now about to receive a championship ring at 21, sounded like a seasoned veteran as the Angels prepared to open camp on Valentine's Day in Tempe, Ariz.

"Everything starts with zero," the reliever said. "The most difficult thing in baseball is to be consistent. You can have one good year but if the next is bad, you're defrauding everyone."

And remember how the spring started for the Angels last year? They got in an exhibition fight with San Diego, and Troy Glaus and Scott Spiezo were suspended. By October, Glaus was the World Series MVP and Spiezo was a postseason star.

There's certain to be news this spring, too. The Veterans Committee will announce its voting for the Hall of Fame on Feb. 26, with Gil Hodges and Marvin Miller among the candidates. And there could be developments with Pete Rose's bid to win reinstatement with commissioner Bud Selig.

On the field, if there's ever a time to think big, it's now.

So maybe that's why Milwaukee ace Ben Sheets was looking ahead after a season in which the Brewers lost 106 games.

"To be honest with you, I don't even think about

last year. It all goes away — good year, bad year, doesn't matter. Just like a good game, bad game, you can't bring it with you," he said.

"Clean slate."

No matter what, there's guaranteed to be a surprise in the majors because of shifts from the Grapefruit League to the Cactus League. Starting this month, Texas and Kansas City will share a training complex in Surprise, Ariz., a northwest suburb of Phoenix.

The Rangers left Port Charlotte, Fla., where alligators used to sun themselves in ponds around the ballpark. The Royals exited their old Boardwalk and Baseball site in central Florida, which opened with a lot of fanfare in 1988 but quickly lost popularity.

This also will be the last time Philadelphia trains at Jack Russell Stadium in Clearwater, Fla. Nearly a half-century old, the ballpark is one of the coziest anywhere, with perfect spring touches — where else can fans find a warning track made of crushed seashells? Meanwhile, a few familiar faces are still looking for jobs.

Reggie Sanders and Kenny Lofton, who started for the Giants in Game 7 of the World Series, remain free agents, and so do Rickey Henderson, Kenny Rogers, Chuck Finley and B.J. Surhoff. David Justice and Andy Benes, meanwhile, say they're done.

For everyone else, the exhibition games begin Feb. 27. That's when Baker and his Chicago Cubs will take on his old team, the Giants. The same day, Cincinnati will visit the Yankees in Tampa, Fla.

The Yankees already are gearing up for Matsui's arrival, and there's a plan to sell sushi at the concession stands at Legends Field.

Derek Jeter, David Wells and manager Joe Torre also are prepared for owner George Steinbrenner's bluster. The Boss was not happy that his guys were whacked out of the playoffs by Anaheim in the opening round, and he let them hear it.

"We know what it's like to win, and we also know what it's like to lose. You don't want to lose anymore," Jeter said.

Thrashers 4, Devils 2

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Marc Savard and Vyacheslav Kozlov scored 15 seconds apart in the third period and Atlanta handed New Jersey its first loss in regulation since Jan. 4 with a 4-2 victory Friday night.

Ilya Kovalchuk and Dan Snyder also scored, and Byron Dafoe made 26 saves in his first game since Jan. 13 as Atlanta improved to 7-2-1 since Bob Hartley took over as coach.

With their 19th victory, the Thrashers matched last season's total.

Stephen Guolla and Patrik Elias scored for the Devils, who had earned points in a franchise-record 14 consecutive games. The loss also snapped a franchise record-tying eight-game winning streak at home and cost New Jersey a chance to take over the league's best record.

Mighty Ducks 3, Coyotes 2

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Stanislav Chistov's goal in the second period put Anaheim ahead to stay, and Jason Krog assisted on all three Mighty Ducks' goals in a victory over Phoenix.

Patric Kjellberg and Niclas Havelid also scored in the second period for Anaheim, and Jean-Sebastien Giguere made 31 saves.

Mike Johnson and Paul Ranheim scored for the Coyotes.

Canucks 4, Sabres 2

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Markus Naslund scored his NHL-leading 36th goal and added an assist as Vancouver beat Buffalo.

Daniel Sedin, Artem Chubarov and Brendan Morrison — with his first goal in 18 games — also scored for the Canucks, unbeaten in their past five games (2-0-3).

Naslund moved ahead of Mario Le-

NHL

mieux for the league lead with 70 points.

Ales Kotalik got his 14th goal of the season and Dmitri Kalinin also scored for the Sabres, who have lost five straight after a 7-1-2 start to January.

Dan Cloutier stopped 34 shots for the Canucks.

With an assist for his 62nd point, Vancouver's Todd Bertuzzi extended his point streak to 10 games — the longest current run in the league.

Capitals 3, Islanders 0

WASHINGTON — Peter Bondra, Jeff Halpern and Steve Konowalchuk each had a goal and an assist, and Olaf Kolzig made 20 saves to send Washington past New York.

The Capitals won all four games of the season series and are 23-1-3 in their past 27 games against New York, including 12-0-2 at home.

The Islanders rarely tested Kolzig, who earned his second shutout of the season.

Wild 4, Sharks 3

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Cliff Ronning followed a disallowed goal early in the third period with one that counted 45 seconds later to lift Minnesota over San Jose.

The Wild won their 27th game — more than each of their first two seasons.

Teemu Selanne had a goal and an assist for the Sharks, who lost for only the second time in six games.

Ronning scored on a five-on-three at 1:31 of the third to give Minnesota a 3-2 lead. Antti Laaksonen scored on a short-handed breakaway four minutes later to make it 4-2.

Richard Park and Pascal Dupuis also had goals for Minnesota, and Dwayne Roloson made 21 saves.

Patrick Marleau and Scott Hannan also scored for the Sharks.

Flames 4, Oilers 3

EDMONTON, Alberta — Jarome Iginla scored his third goal of the game with 1:08 left in the third period to lift Calgary over Edmonton.

Iginla picked up the puck in front of the Oilers' net and slid a backhander past goaltender Jussi Markkanen with defenseman Eric Brewer draped on his back. Iginla tied the game 4:50 earlier when Craig Conroy's shot deflected off Oilers defenseman Jason Smith right to him.

Chris Drury also scored for Calgary, and Iginla added an assist.

The leading scorer in the NHL last season, Iginla has 19 goals this year. Roman Turek made 27 saves for the Flames.

Todd Marchant, Alexei Semenov and Mike York scored for Edmonton.

Kings 8, Hurricanes 2

LOS ANGELES — Bryan Smolinski scored three power-play goals for his third career hat trick and Jared Aulin scored his first two NHL goals as Los Angeles sent Carolina to its fifth straight loss.

The Hurricanes, who came within three victories of a Stanley Cup title last season, are 10 points out of a playoff spot with 27 games left.

Jaroslav Svoboda and Josef Vasicek scored for the Hurricanes, who have dropped 13 of their past 14 games and seven straight on the road. Earlier Friday, they traded Sami Kapanen to Philadelphia for former Flyers No. 1 draft pick Pavel Brendl.

Brad Chartrand and rookie Joe Corvo also scored for Los Angeles and Ziggy Palffy got his 20th goal. Defenseman Jaroslav Modry tied a career high with three assists for the Kings, who had a season-high four power-play goals.

From The Associated Press

Scores/standings

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	33	13	3	4	73	140	102
Philadelphia	28	14	9	2	67	126	114
N.Y. Islanders	24	22	5	2	55	144	153
Pittsburgh	21	24	4	5	51	140	160
N.Y. Rangers	21	27	7	2	51	146	178

Northeast Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Ottawa	33	14	7	1	74	179	126
Toronto	29	20	4	1	63	153	132
Boston	27	19	5	2	61	159	139
Montreal	21	22	7	5	54	147	164
Buffalo	15	26	7	4	41	112	138

Southeast Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	26	20	7	3	62	161	150
Tampa Bay	22	20	7	5	56	148	152
Florida	16	20	10	8	50	124	160
Atlanta	19	27	3	4	45	147	188
Carolina	17	27	6	5	45	119	161

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	28	15	8	4	68	176	142
Detroit	27	16	9	2	65	154	133
Chicago	22	19	10	3	57	129	130
Columbus	20	25	6	2	48	150	164
Nashville	17	23	9	4	47	121	142

Northwest Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	31	16	8	0	70	170	143
Minnesota	27	18	8	1	63	132	120
Edmonton	25	17	6	6	62	151	145
Colorado	22	14	11	5	60	148	129
Calgary	18	26	8	3	47	120	155

Pacific Division

	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	30	11	12	1	73	167	109
Anaheim	24	19	7	4	59	133	134
Los Angeles	22	24	4	4	52	140	149
San Jose	20	22	6	5	51	146	158
Phoenix	19	23	7	4	49	133	145

Two points for a win, one point for a tie and overtime loss.

Friday's games

Vancouver 4, Buffalo 2
Washington 3, N.Y. Islanders 0
Atlanta 4, New Jersey 2
Minnesota 4, San Jose 3
Calgary 4, Edmonton 3
Los Angeles 8, Carolina 2
Anaheim 3, Phoenix 2

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